

Lasby, Mary

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Joanne Blythe - Northeast Swale Boundries - CK 4205-40
Attachments: WAS Swale Boundaries Letter 6Feb23.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 4:14 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Joanne Blythe - Northeast Swale Boundries - CK 4205-40

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, February 6, 2023 - 16:10

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

Date: Monday, February 06, 2023

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Joanne

Last Name: Blythe

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED] Munroe Avenue South

City: Saskatoon

Province: Saskatchewan

Postal Code: S7H [REDACTED]

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): Wild About Saskatoon

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 7.2.3

Comments:

Please see attached letter

Attachments:

- [WAS Swale Boundaries Letter 6Feb23.pdf](#) 117.48 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No



February 6, 2023

To: the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services.

As many of you will know, Wild about Saskatoon is a grassroots group of dedicated volunteers who advocate for nature – wild lives and wild places – in and around this city. As such, we are deeply concerned about the fate of the Swales. This concern has only been exacerbated by boundaries for the Northeast and Small Swales being presented by the city administration to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services.

We appreciate that the administration has recognized the lack of consensus in setting the Swale Boundaries and, in honour of this recognition, has presented three different options that variously incorporate recommendations from stakeholders. However, despite this range of options given, many of the stakeholders whose recommendations are supposed to be reflected in the three options are dissatisfied with the administration's depiction of these options as well as their endorsement of Option #2. This option strives only to meet the bare minimum of conservation standards and regulations (and in some regards, does not even meet them).

Nor is it consistent with the city's Official Community Plan. For example Section E (Environmental Leadership) Policy 2.1(2)(b) states "Urban development should avoid impacts to natural areas with particular consideration given to interconnected sensitive ecosystems, such as swales." Option #2 would not avoid impacts.

The Northeast Swale Watchers have ably summed up their concerns regarding probable impacts. Concerns we share. The plan put forward:

1. fails to meet even minimum standards for protecting the sharp-tailed grouse dancing ground in the Northeast Swale;
2. fails to protect all known areas of high-quality habitat and biodiversity hotspots;
3. fails to address the need for functional habitat connectivity between the Northeast and Small Swales;
4. fails to adequately buffer the hydrologically sensitive Small Swale; and
5. fails to reroute commuter traffic away from the Ecological Core of the Northeast Swale.

In contrast to this inadequate vision for the future of the Swales, the Swale Watchers have provided a fourth option (which they have submitted to Committee members). We believe it applies a clear and forward-thinking set of principles that would better protect the integrity and life of the Swales, while allowing for future residential development through Biodiversity-Sensitive Urban Design principles.

The Swale Watchers' recommendations are more aligned with the city's own Green Infrastructure Strategy, especially the principle of ecological integrity and the goal of a protected, enhanced, and linked network of natural assets. The maps provided by both the administration and the Swale Watchers clearly show that the ecosystems of the Swales are interconnected and it is vital for their mutual survival that a sufficient flow of natural resources (e.g., water, pollination, species migration) can move between them.

In this regard, we are deeply concerned that the administration's recommendation offers an exposed, depleted, and severed design for the interconnected, sensitive ecosystems of the Swales. While it might not operate within a hasty timeline of paving paradise for a parking lot, following administration's recommendation will, over time, starve the Swales to the point they will no longer be able to sustain themselves. Death by a thousand cuts. By contrast, the recommended boundaries proposed by the Swale Watchers reaches into Saskatoon's future to help sustain both resilient grassland ecosystems and a growing urban population. These priorities need not be at odds. Indeed, the expanded boundaries and vision for the Swales will form an essential part of the National Urban Park proposed for Saskatoon, which has the stated goal of "building connections between nature and people."

We strongly endorse the Swale Watchers' recommendations toward an integrated vision of living well among all our beautiful city's inhabitants. Wild About Saskatoon therefore recommends that this committee does not recommend Option #2 to Council, but rather recommends to Council that that they re-engage with the Swale Watchers to develop biodiversity and other related conservation targets to guide decision-making around the Swale boundaries; boundaries that assure the natural assets of the Northeast and Small Swales are protected and enhanced. The Swale Watchers have requested the opportunity to continue working with the city, Meewasin, and others to address their concerns and better safeguard the future of the Swales. We sincerely hope this committee will endorse their request.

For Wild About Saskatoon

Chad Hammond

Joanne Blythe